

ISIS AS LICENSED US FOREIGN ASSETS

Excerpt from forthcoming 7th Draft of *Hackers' Wars: Cyber Realism*

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The overwhelming nature of ISIS as a cyber-savvy terrorist organization presents undeniable opportunities to apply cyber realist analysis in order to show that ISIS - created under US occupation following the Arab Spring in Syria – is an US asset and its members are functionaries of the US government against Middle Eastern societies. Such operations are commonly referred to as black ops – US military operations in line with US policy objectives for which the US cannot or is not willing to take responsibility.

I expect to come across more information suggesting ISIS to be an offshoot of Anonymous in Syria and Iraq due to their appearance following the Arab Spring, common forums used online, recruitment methods, age and gender of members, practices of female and child sex trafficking, hacking, coups, war crimes, cooperation at one time with the US government, and other elements of organized criminality.

This paper shows - through incongruencies between policy and cyber policy enforcement, and between varying media reports - the manner in which the United States government deliberately promotes insurgencies, insurrections and anomic violence to invoke executive and congressional war powers, making it possible policy-wise for the Office of Foreign Assets Control of the US Treasury Department to take control of a designated terrorist group's financial assets. US policy on terrorist asset seizure is as follows, and defines assets as:

any property, tangible or intangible, or service, including currency or monetary instruments or financial securities, financial services, lodging, training, expert advice or assistance, safehouses, false documentation or identification, communications equipment, facilities, weapons, lethal substances, explosives, personnel (1 or more individuals who maybe or include oneself), and transportation... Any U.S. financial institution that becomes aware that it has possession of or control over funds in which a designated FTO or its agent has an interest must retain possession of or control over the funds and report the funds to the Office of Foreign Assets Control of the U.S. Department of the Treasury.¹

Through war powers permission to seize the civil and human rights forfeited by insurgents, insurrectionists, and any persons or places proximal to designated terrorist networks, the use of policy in this way may constitute terrorism, support of terrorism, and human exploitation in the form of war-profiteering, colonialism or political-economic exploitation through terrorist designation, extortion, theft, intellectual property theft, identify theft, hacking, ransoming, hostageing, human trafficking and enslavement. Enslavement is defined as “situations of exploitation that a person cannot refuse or leave because of threats, violence, coercion, deception, and/or abuse of power.”²

¹ <https://www.state.gov/foreign-terrorist-organizations>

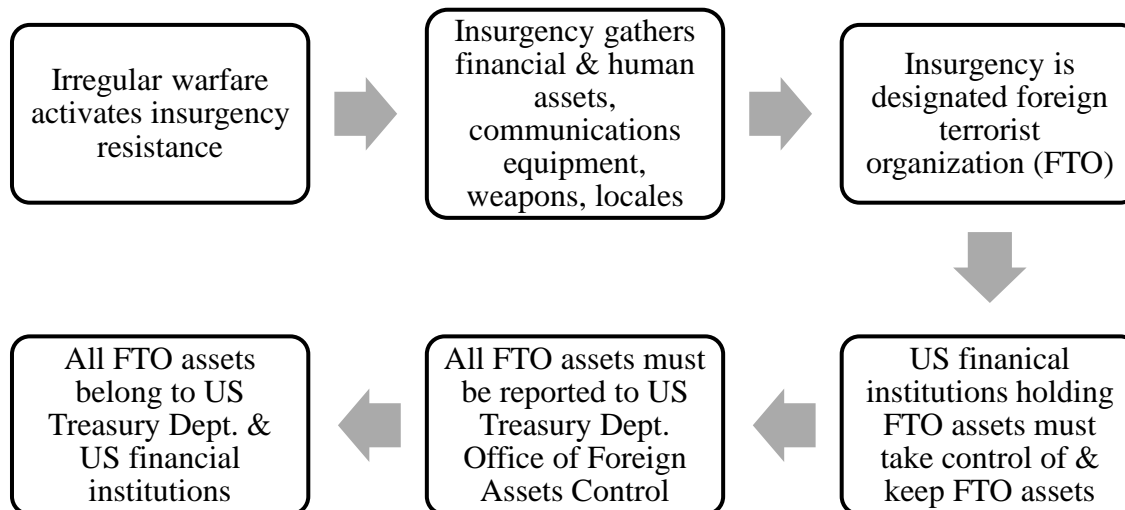
² International Labour Office. *Global estimates of modern slavery: Forced labour and forced marriage*. 2017.

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Throughout this paper, it is shown that insurgencies - which when domestic are referred to as insurrections - and anomic violence are promoted by US Joint Forces and Intelligence through irregular warfare techniques which include the use of threats, violence, coercion, military deception operations and abuses of power.

The culmination of these factors give rise to conditions defined as terroristic insurgency or insurrection, and when such assets are seized upon by the US Treasury Department's Office of Foreign Assets Control and other "stakeholders of the financial enterprise of ISIL" – as the US Intelligence ISIL Finance Team will call them – the control and possession of such assets give rise to the conditions defined as human exploitation, trafficking and enslavement. This policy cycle - from irregular warfare, to terrorism, to enslavement - is codified in US counterterrorism policy. It is perpetuated as human exploitation and constitutes an especially inscrutable, insidious manifestation of modern day enslavement through military conquest and debt bondage.

Chart of Counterterrorism Foreign Asset Control Policy



Irregular warfare is defined as a violent struggle among state and nonstate actors for legitimacy and influence over the relevant populations. (See: *Irregular Warfare Joint Operating Concept*, Department of Defense, 11 September 2007, p. 1)

Assets are any property, tangible or intangible, or service, including currency or monetary instruments or financial securities, financial services, lodging, training, expert advice or assistance, safehouses, false documentation or identification, communications equipment, facilities, weapons, lethal substances, explosives, personnel (1 or more individuals who may be or include oneself), and transportation.

In the section Unusual Games, I describe at length the policy-approved techniques practiced in irregular warfare training. The techniques of terrorism and human trafficking are more readily defined to the reader. Below is a demonstrative chart of the shared techniques between the three phenomena meant to emphasize origin and cycle of said human security phenomena. On the left are the features of enslavement/forced labor defined by the International Labour Office of Geneva.

Table of Techniques of Human Security Phenomena

	Irregular Warfare	Insurgency/ Insurrection	Enslavement/ Forced Labor
Threats	✓	✓	✓
Violence	✓	✓	✓
Coercion	✓	✓	✓
Deception	✓	✓	✓
Abuse of Power	✓	✓	✓

By 2013 Syrian fighter groups were not determined to be in-line or out-of-line with US policy objectives as they were especially amorphous even for the region and unreliable in their ideologies. Nevertheless US politicians associated and even boasted about sending US military aid to the groups.

In apparent return business for Twitter following the 2011 Twitter Revolution in Syria, in March 2013 Senator John McCain shared news on his Twitter account that the US was shipping 200,000 MREs [meals ready-to-eat] to the “Free Syrian Army”.³

A few months after his MRE tweet, in May of 2013 Sen. McCain shared a group photo of himself on an “Important visit with brave fighters in #Syria who are risking their lives for freedom and need our help”.⁴

Unsurprisingly then, in August 2014 Senator McCain wrote on his Twitter account as part of a domestic partisan argument that “#ISIS is largest, richest terrorist group in history & 192,000 dead in #Syria”.⁵

In the 2014 VICE News documentary *The Islamic State (Part 1)*, what appears to be the same Syrian man pictured with John McCain as “a brave fighter” is shown as ISIS Press Officer nicknamed “Abu Mosa”.⁶

Ideologically, we learn from the VICE News documentary that ISIS members are obsessed with removing the borders created through the Sykes-Picot Agreement – a reference to The Great Game political era.

³ <https://twitter.com/senjohnmccain/status/312334156665335808>

⁴ <https://twitter.com/senjohnmccain/status/339455679800700928?lang=en>

⁵ <https://twitter.com/senjohnmccain/status/505094561434451968?lang=en>

⁶ https://video.vice.com/en_us/video/the-islamic-state-part-1/55a8222337d5f90048b624c9

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Tactically, we learn from VICE News that ISIS members drive US tanks with extreme facility, and it is of course no secret that ISIS has driven US military tanks throughout their occupation of Syria and western Iraq.⁷

It is attested to by Turkish government forces that NATO supplies ISIS through Turkey and that Turkish officials have been tasked with protecting ISIS members, including members of the Turkish police who have been sent to guard ISIS members and ISIS materiel.⁸

In August of 2012 Reuters reported in “Obama Secret Syria Order Authorizes Support For Rebels”:

President Barack Obama has signed a secret order authorizing U.S. support for rebels seeking to depose Syrian President Bashar al-Assad and his government, U.S. sources familiar with the matter said. Obama’s order, approved earlier this year and known as an intelligence ‘finding,’ broadly permits the CIA and other U.S. agencies to provide support that could help the rebels oust Assad... The White House is for now apparently stopping short of giving the rebels lethal weapons, even as some U.S. allies do just that. But U.S. and European officials have said that there have been noticeable improvements in the coherence and effectiveness of Syrian rebel groups in the past few weeks. That represents a significant change in assessments of the rebels by Western officials, who previously characterized Assad’s opponents as a disorganized, almost chaotic, rabble... NBC News reported that the Free Syrian Army had obtained nearly two dozen surface-to-air missiles, weapons that could be used against Assad’s helicopters and fixed-wing aircraft. Syrian government armed forces have employed such air power more extensively in recent days. NBC said the shoulder-fired missiles, also known as MANPADs, had been delivered to the rebels via Turkey... Bassam al-Dada, a political adviser to the Free Syrian Army, denied the NBC report, telling the Arabic-language TV network Al-Arabiya that the group had ‘not obtained any such weapons at all.’ The White House is for now apparently stopping short of giving the rebels lethal weapons, even as some U.S. allies do just that... Reuters first reported last week that the White House had crafted a directive authorizing greater U.S. covert assistance to Syrian rebels. It was unclear at that time whether Obama had signed it. Separately from the president’s secret order, the Obama administration has stated publicly that it is providing some backing for Assad’s opponents. The State Department said on Wednesday the U.S. government had set aside a total of \$25 million for “non-lethal” assistance to the Syrian opposition. A U.S. official said that was mostly for communications equipment, including encrypted radios... Some U.S. lawmakers, such as Republican Senators John McCain and Lindsey Graham, have criticized Obama for moving too slowly to assist the rebels and have suggested the U.S. government become directly involved in arming Assad’s opponents. Other lawmakers have suggested caution, saying too little is known about the many rebel groups.⁹

The US Department of Justice and Office of Foreign Assets Control announced the plans to seize over 100 websites for the outlets’ alleged connection to Iran’s special forces military unit

⁷ https://video.vice.com/en_us/video/the-islamic-state-part-1/55a8222337d5f90048b624c9

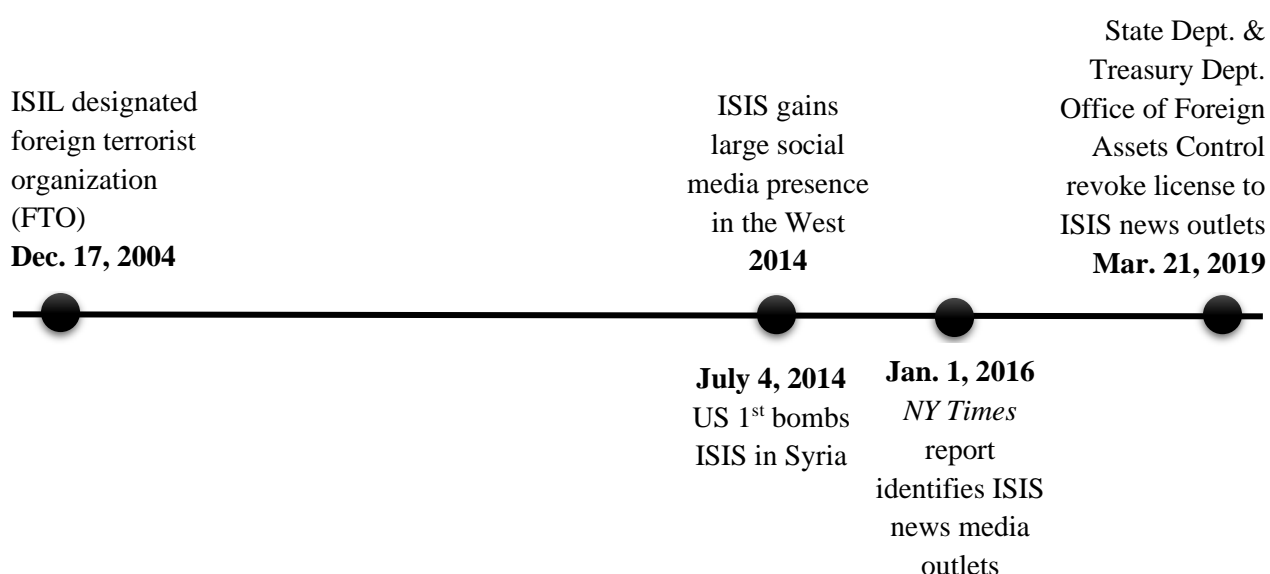
⁸ Nafeez, Ahmed. “Whistleblower exposes how NATO’s leading ally is arming and funding ISIS: ‘I am the police chief who was asked to guard ISIS terrorists’”. *Insurge Intelligence*. 16 September 2016.

⁹ https://www.huffpost.com/entry/obama-secret-syria-order_n_1730712?tw_p=tw&guccounter=1

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the IRGC and for operating “without an OFAC license.”¹⁰ However ISIS has maintained its online presence since 2014 with only intervention to close down accounts by platform providers. This implies that ISIS Facebook and Twitter accounts, bots, Telegram account, WordPress blog, its application “The Dawn of Glad Tidings”, its online publication *Dabiq*, and its online news medias al-Hayat and al-Amaq have operated with a US Office of Foreign Assets Control license. Not until five years after the ISIS offensive began, and three years after Amaq was reported in *The New York Times* as an ISIS asset,¹¹ was executive action enforced on March 21, 2019 to revoke the OFAC license of ISIS’s principle news outlets Amaq News Agency and Al-Hayat Media Center.¹²

Timeline of Designation of ISIS as Foreign Terrorist Organization



The deliberate escalation of ISIS media appears to be strategy of both the US and ISIS. Apparent in the informed inaction of US officials and in the following description from *The New York Times* in 2016, based on SITE Intelligence analysis, it is clear that ISIS media was allowed to disseminate strategically over several years at the directive of both the US and ISIS:

Amaq appears to have been created, or allowed to develop, as a way to create a source of information that is still basically controlled by the Islamic State but is somewhat removed from the group, giving ISIS more of the appearance of legitimacy... The researchers there say they first saw the Amaq name pop up during the drawn-out battle for Kobani, the Kurdish town on the Syria-Turkey border that ISIS captured in 2014.¹³

¹⁰ <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/united-states-seizes-websites-used-iranian-islamic-radio-and-television-union-and-kata-ib>

¹¹ <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/01/15/world/middleeast/a-news-agency-with-scoops-directly-from-isis-and-a-veneer-of-objectivity.html>

¹² <https://www.state.gov/executive-order-13224/>

¹³ “A News Agency With Scoops Directly From ISIS, and a Veneer of Objectivity” *The New York Times* (January 14, 2016)

In August of 2018 Washington news publication *The Hill* published an article titled “What ISIS is up to during your summer vacation” predicting an increase in online activity from the Islamic State. An excerpt follows:

While the media’s attention is focused on the transgressions of social media companies relating to privacy, data collection, and Putin’s election interference, ISIS has slowly rebuilt its online presence after its battlefield defeats in Iraq and Syria. Although the Islamic State was forced out of nearly all the lands it conquered, it still controls over 1,000 square miles of Syrian territory, or roughly the size of the city of Los Angeles, according to the NYT. Counter terrorism officials are increasingly worried that ISIS has shelved its ‘incite and recruit’ social media campaigns in favor of creating multi-lingual social media ‘terrorist academies’ providing elementary instruction on how to manufacture lethal poisons and explosives such as triacetone triperoxide (TATP), how to make pipe and gas tank bombs, how to navigate the ins and outs of ‘rent and ram’ terrorism, and, most recently, how to breach cyber security safeguards protecting soft targets, such as surface transportation links in European cities.¹⁴

Were ISIS not licensed by the US Office of Foreign Asset Control, it would not maintain a cyber presence for over five years in plain view of Capitol Hill news media and counterterrorism officials. Additionally, as Sen. McCain tweeted, proclaiming “#ISIS is largest, richest terrorist group in history”, the US government was highly aware of the financial assets of the Islamic State.¹⁵

The OFAC’s powers to “impos[e] sanctions on those threatening disruption of the Middle East peace process” were established in 1995 as “the first sanctions programs targeted against behavior, rather than a country.” Following the September 11th 2001 attacks, “President George W. Bush issued an executive order that authorized Treasury and the U.S. State Department to target those who commit, threaten or support terrorism with sanctions that isolated them from the global financial system.”¹⁶ If ISIS were not licensed foreign assets of the US government intended to be a tool of Middle East policy, the Office of Foreign Asset Control would have applied financial sanctions which would have isolated the group from the global economy and cyberspace.

In 2016 the Office of the Director of National Intelligence in a report titled “ISIL Finances: Future Scenarios” scenarioed the three to five year financial prospects of the Islamic State in three scenarios. The report describes itself in the following excerpt:

This assessment provides **stakeholders visibility into the financial enterprise of ISIL** by detailing cash-management practices, primary revenue streams, and expenditures related to their operations. Global financial industry professionals and consultants, in collaboration with US Government and state all-source intelligence specialists and financial analysts, contributed to the analysis herein.¹⁷

¹⁴ <https://thehill.com/opinion/national-security/401282-what-isis-is-up-to-during-your-summer-vacation>

¹⁵ <https://twitter.com/senjohnmccain/status/505094561434451968?lang=en>

¹⁶ <https://www.wsj.com/articles/BL-252B-3473> “OFAC Rises as Sanctions Become A Major Policy Tool”

¹⁷ Office of the Director of National Intelligence. “ISIL Finances: Future Scenarios”. The Office of the Director of National Intelligence. 27 September 2016, p. 19.

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In 2017 the RAND Corporation came up with similar financial strategy for ISIS in a conference titled “Financial Futures of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant: Findings from a RAND Corporation Workshop”.¹⁸

Not only did the US National Intelligence Directorate plot out IS’s financial strategy, but the ODNI had also created a dedicated group to do so which it called The Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) Finance Team. The ISIL Finance Team was headed by members from the National Ground Intelligence Center of the United States Army Intelligence and Security Command and the Office of the Director of National Intelligence, and included members from the US Government Accountability Office, Department of Treasury, Department of Homeland Security Immigration and Customs Enforcement, and National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency, and private sector including Western Union, Colorado Information Analysis Center, Whitehorse Technologies, Pricewaterhouse Coopers, HSBC Bank, The Bank of New York Mellon, Thomson Reuters, and Sojourn Consulting. Additionally, the US ISIL Finance Team reports:

Open source reporting was corroborated through engagement with more than forty subject-matter experts from academia, law enforcement, research institutions, art auction houses, industry practitioners, financial institutions, and other US Government officials.¹⁹

It should be noted on the presence of art auction houses on the Intelligence ISIL Finance Team that most of the antiquities held in Iraqi museums and heritage sites purportedly destroyed by ISIS members in videos posted online were in fact stone or plaster replicas and forgeries. Some of the originals have been held in Baghdad museums all along.²⁰ Other originals have been uncovered in ports in Geneva, Switzerland which French Finance Minister Michel Sapin termed a “‘weak link’ in counter terrorist financing.” Still other antiquities and rare collectibles were reportedly seen being loaded into large trucks and taken off to an undisclosed location.²¹

Major projections of the US ISIL financial strategy follows:

The Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) Finance Team evaluated ISIL’s financial structure to determine how the Violent Extremist Organization (VEO) may generate and manage financial funds across contested regions and controlled populations. The team identified and examined three scenarios - Transnational Jihadi Brotherhood; Jihadi Territorial Authority; and a Jihadi Caliphate - to determine how ISIL might evolve over the next three to five years... The assessment aims to provide stakeholders with valuable insight while also encouraging discussion about ISIL’s evolution and possible financial management strategies. The team did not endeavor to predict the future trajectory of ISIL nor definitively assert

¹⁸ Clarke, Colin P., Kimberly Jackson, Patrick B. Johnston, Eric Robinson, and Howard J. Shatz, Financial Futures of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant: Findings from a RAND Corporation Workshop. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2017. https://www.rand.org/pubs/conf_proceedings/CF361.html.

¹⁹ Office of the Director of National Intelligence. “ISIL Finances: Future Scenarios”. The Office of the Director of National Intelligence. 27 September 2016, p. 19-20.

²⁰ Al Arabiya News Staff Writer. “Sorry, ISIS: smashed statues ‘were fakes’”. *Al Arabiya News*. 14 March 2015. Internet resource. <<https://english.alarabiya.net/variety/2015/03/14/Sorry-ISIS-smashed-museum-statues-were-fakes->>; RT Staff. “Ancient statues destroyed by ISIS fake, real ones safe – report”. *RT*. 14 March 2015. Internet resource. <<https://www.rt.com/news/240801-isis-destroy-statues-fake/>>.

²¹ The Strait Times Staff. “Swiss seize artefacts looted from Syria’s Palmyra, stashed at free ports”. *The Strait Times*. 3 December 2015.

which financial resources ISIL needs to sustain each trajectory. ISIL's fortunes could rapidly change based on the focused attention given to the VEO... ISIL's income is highly dependent on the VEO's military strengths, land holdings, and ability to extract value from the population and natural resources it controls. Underlying political, geographic, and regulatory concerns also factor in how this VEO generates, stores, distributes, and transports money within its operational areas and across international borders.

- Under the Transnational Jihadi Brotherhood scenario, ISIL continues to struggle for land control and is unable to govern from a central location. The group dissolves into loose nodes and networks across different regions, and is largely dependent on self-financed operatives carrying out uncoordinated attacks on "soft" targets under the appearance of a cohesive global organization.
- Under the Jihadi Territorial Authority scenario, ISIL secures land control agreements with neighboring nations under truce terms. Finances become more centralized yet remain mostly outside of the formal banking sector. Its finances remain highly dependent on the Informal Value Transfer System (IVTS) and other forms of Trade-based Money Laundering (TBML) to move significant sums of money across international borders.
- Under the Jihadi Caliphate scenario, ISIL's land control expands to include interconnected and distant regions. All aspects of government become centralized and are governed from one specific region; a central financial body is established, i.e. a ministry or central bank, to issue and enforce fiscal and monetary policies across all regions and contested territories.²²

Further research includes surveying The Brookings Institute's "Here to stay and growing: Combating ISIS propaganda networks" *The Brookings Project on U.S. Relations with the Islamic World U.S.-Islamic World Forum Papers 2015* published October 2015 which also projected future growth strategy on behalf of the Islamic State.²³

In "Measuring the Impact of ISIS Social Media Strategy" *Stanford Network Analysis Project* Majid Alfifi, Parisa Kaghazgaran, and James Caverlee Department of Computer Science & Engineering Texas A&M University, Fred Morstatter Information Sciences Institute University of Southern California (2018) summarize their findings in the following:

In this work we study the extent to which ISIS is able to spread their message beyond their immediate supporters. Are they operating in their own sphere with limited interaction with the overall community? Or are they well rooted among normal users? We find that three-quarters of the interactions ISIS received on Twitter in 2015 actually came from eventually suspended accounts raising questions about the potential number of ISIS-related accounts and how organic ISIS audience is. Towards tackling these questions, we have created a unique dataset of 17 million ISIS-related tweets posted in 2015... although Twitter suspends accounts that violate the terms of service, ISIS accounts seem to succeed in staying longer on the service posting more tweets than other malicious eventually suspended accounts (Figure 1) – making studying their impact even more important... Concretely, we share with the research community a dataset of 24k ISIS users and their 17 million tweets that span all of 2015. We additionally make an initial look into the impact of their behavior on the Twitter community as a whole in Section 4... Berger and Morgan identified 46,000 ISIS supporter

²² Office of the Director of National Intelligence. "ISIL Finances: Future Scenarios". The Office of the Director of National Intelligence. 27 September 2016, p. 1-2.

²³ https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/IS-Propaganda_Web_English.pdf

accounts on Twitter... In a recent effort, Badawy et al., investigated how ISIS supporters take advantage of social media to spread their propaganda and recruit militants by studying 1.9 million tweets posted by 25,000 accounts –recognized as pro-ISIS and suspended by Twitter... Next, we move to studying the first level users who interacted with ISIS accounts. We find that about 76% of the interactions ISIS received actually came from eventually suspended users (Figure 4a). As we reported in [1], 23% of active Arabic Twitter users in 2015 were eventually suspended (contributing 21% to the Arabic Twitter volume that year). This means that, roughly speaking, by mere chance a community of retweeters will be about 20% suspended and 80% not suspended... we collect all tweets generated by retweeters of ISIS accounts (i.e. we collect all their tweets whether ISIS-related or not). We first note that those accounts generated 1.4 billion tweets (15% of all Arabic content in 2015!)... Are ISIS accounts recruited or born that way? As we see in Figure 1, ISIS accounts manage to post more content before getting suspended. Were those accounts normal accounts that later turned into bad ones (e.g., as a result of recruitment campaign by ISIS) and hence had more time to spread content? Or were those accounts created to support ISIS from the beginning? A simple way to study this is to check accounts from birth to death. We focus here on accounts that were born in January 2015 and were suspended before December 2015. There are 5,057 such accounts that generated 4,970,042 tweets. We check their top hashtags used at three points in their lifespan: at birth, mid-life, and at death (right before suspension). Table 4 shows that although a majority of accounts have been pro-ISIS from the beginning (because #Islamic_State is the top hashtag all the time), we still see a strengthening of ISIS support over time evident in the increasingly more ISIS related hashtags appearing over users lifespan. For example, we see some innocuous hashtags (e.g., supplications) in the at birth column in Table 4 that we don't see at later stages... Starting from a 24k seed accounts known to support ISIS, we were able to uncover a much larger larger group of potentially ISIS related accounts (170k users).²⁴

Why effective policymaking does not occur I attribute to the implementation of modelism and strategic incompetence in policymaking – addressed in the section The Bosnia Model, The Rumsfeld Model. The model I apply here – realism and specifically cyber realism – attempts to identify, especially in the case of the Arab Spring, those monopolizing the “unitary governmental decision-making with a high degree of control over implementation and access to near-perfect information.”

As the title indicates, I conclude here and throughout that US intel-security and technologists hold the monopoly to grant infringements to various actors. In the emergency disaster example above, that is legal counsel and governors. Here I demonstrate how accessible information can identify US Intelligence and Special Forces’ monopoly as grantors of cyber infringement to terrorist organizations which leads to anomic violence delegitimizing a state and destroying a society.

It is theorized that this is done to expand the sphere of influence and profits the intel-security industries. Infringement to inflict violence is granted to overt terrorist actors by the actual monopoly holders for a limited period of time needed to achieve policy objectives. This industry process I term *terrorism in practice*, described in detail in the section Unusual Games.

²⁴ Alfifi, Majid, Parisa Kaghazgaran, James Caverlee and Fred Morstatter. “Measuring the Impact of ISIS Social Media Strategy”. Stanford Network Analysis Platform. 2018.

Within the paradigm of cyber realism, the exercise of monopoly on infringement to exercise violence must refer to the State that is actually in control of the three elements of Clausewitz's triad of war: operational instruments, popular passions, and policy. If it is shown that there is significant ability or disability for a state or person to control either instruments, public opinion, or policy, then that fact must be taken into account to determine actual monopoly-holder status.

An unfortunate starting point of this book has been the need to argue that the Arab Spring was decidedly damaging to the Arab countries involved, and the democratic reforms – if they really ever were attempted - were abject failures followed by unimaginable human tragedy. Because the real-life consequences can be so compelling, politicking our understanding of cyber operations is argued against under cyber realism.

In this sense, cyber realism is antithetical to cyber deception. The conclusion reached in this section insists that the cyber domain is the domain of the US government which has near perfect implementation and near perfect access to information. Instances and appearances to the contrary, especially that of grass-root media revolutions and cyberterrorism perpetrated against the US, are proven wholly unrealistic.

In *The CNN Effect in Action: how the news media pushed the West toward war in Kosovo*, author Bahador writes:

Realism assumes that state behavior is determined by the pursuit of national interests and security, bounded by power relative to other states... Such models, like realism, assume unitary governmental decision-making with a high degree of control over implementation and access to near-perfect information.²⁵

Bahador defines high degree of control and high degree of access to information in the same chapter, characterized by control of and information to the three domains necessary to war: “popular passions, operational instruments, and political objectives”. These three arms of war, from Carl von Clausewitz's *On War* (1832), are outlined in Bahador's chapter “The CNN Effect and War”.²⁶

I suggest these alternatively can be called public opinion, technology, and policy. Due to political proclivities towards bureaucratic stances of plausible deniability, it is important to imbue states or quasi-states with responsibility for war when they reasonably have access and control over a nexus of these three domains.

If we are to use sociologist Max Weber's definition of the State as those who hold a monopoly on violence and coercion over a territory, which must become defined as such through “a process of legitimation”, we would be compelled to assume that either cyber hacker collectives have become the authorized state over the State, or that they act with the authority and permission granted by the State.

In further example of actors in the Arab Spring, Anonymous the hacking collective explicitly claims to “have launched other efforts while also building new strategies and recruiting individuals from across the globe - some of whom hold significant positions in media, industry, and the sciences.”²⁷

Overall, I would argue that ISIS is at its base a cyberterrorism group facilitated in its methods of spreading by the US media technology industry and US global economic hegemony.

²⁵ Bahador. *The CNN Effect in Action*, p. 57-58.

²⁶ Bahador. *The CNN Effect in Action*, p. 47.

²⁷ Anonymous. “Opinion: Anonymous and the global correction”.

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Like other devastating consequences arising from the Arab Spring, ISIS is a foreign policy tool licensed by the state at various stages as part of the US Middle East “peace” policy.

Cyber realist assessments can be achieved with just functional knowledge of information today. Take, for example, the glaring inconsistencies between US Army Intelligence accounts of an US attack on a Doctors Without Border hospital in Afghanistan and other information that can be found online about that and other attacks in Afghanistan.

The Army Intelligence account comes in the form of a book review of the 2021 publication *Eagle Down: The Last Special Forces Fighting the Forever War* by Wall Street Journal reporter Jessica Donati. The book focuses specifically on retelling US Special Forces accounts of the continued presence of Special Forces despite the alleged end of US occupation in Afghanistan. Written by Army Intelligence Officer James King, the review begins:

On October 3rd 2015 a United States Air Force AC-130 conducted an air strike in support of US Special Forces under attack in Kunduz, Afghanistan. Mistaking the building below for a Taliban stronghold, the AC-130 instead hit a Medecins Sans Frontieres (Doctors without Borders) hospital in the heart of the city, ultimately killing 42 people.²⁸

It is nearly impossible that Army Intel Officer King is being frank in his assessment of the airstrike. His book review is an attempt to control the narrative on the October 2015 attack. It is a contribution to a military deception operation obscuring an attack taken in violation of International Humanitarian Law.

With a simple Internet search, one can find a map identifying cities hosting Doctors Without Borders sites in Afghanistan, as well as the names of the hospitals and a description of the services of all DWR-affiliated hospitals, readily available on the Doctors Without Borders public-facing website.²⁹ Furthermore, the hospital had been publicly designated a Doctors Without Borders trauma center since 2011.³⁰

In contrast to Army Intel Officer King’s assessment, DWB, or *Medecins Sans Frontieres* (Doctors without Borders), reports that the hospital was the target of *multiple* airstrikes by the US Air Force at the behest of US Special Forces. DWB reports:

During the early morning hours of Saturday, October 3, 2015, MSF’s trauma hospital in Kunduz, Afghanistan, came under precise and repeated airstrikes by United States forces. The main hospital building, which housed the intensive care unit, emergency rooms, laboratory, X-ray, outpatient department, mental health, and physiotherapy ward, was hit with precision, repeatedly, during each aerial raid, while surrounding buildings were left mostly untouched.³¹

In the *Eagle Down* publication, US Special Forces depict their situation as pathetic. “‘We don’t know what our goals are because they keep changing all the time,’ one of the main Green Berets featured in the book tells his superior while deployed to Helmand province. ‘You don’t know

²⁸ King, Lieutenant Colonel James. “Review - Eagle Down: The Last Special Forces Fighting the Forever War”. *Small Wars Journal*. 23 February 2021.

²⁹ <https://www.doctorswithoutborders.org/what-we-do/countries/afghanistan>

³⁰ <https://www.doctorswithoutborders.org/what-we-do/news-stories/news/afghanistan-msf-demands-explanations-after-deadly-airstrikes-hit>

³¹ <https://www.doctorswithoutborders.org/what-we-do/news-stories/news/key-msf-publications-about-kunduz-hospital-attack>

what we're supposed to be doing, yet you keep sending us on crazy missions where we could all die for no reason.”³²

In complete contrast to the depiction of an underfunded group conducting hapless airstrikes and braving deadly missions, security in Afghanistan has deteriorated in highly strategic ways under the authority of US Special Forces and a party deemed strategic partners of US forces since the signing of the U.S.-Taliban Agreement of February 2, 2020.³³

In a report found on *Stars and Stripes*, it is reported that not a single US soldier has been killed in Afghanistan in 2020, and that the billions of dollars funding exclusively Special Forces operations in Afghanistan are reportedly not making their way to Afghan national forces. In strategic attacks that seem to be confused over whether the year is 2002 or 2020, the Taliban, now US Special Forces strategic allies, are used to justify the deterioration of plans for national peace talks. The article reports:

Instead of peace, Taliban offensives swept the country, overrunning checkpoints and surrounding key cities like Kandahar and Lashkar Gah. Attacks last summer and fall [2020] were 18% higher than the same period the year before the deal, the United Nations said. While no U.S. troops have died in combat since the signing of the deal last February, Afghan forces lost nearly 10,000 soldiers and police in dozens of Taliban attacks last year [2020], officials said. More than 3,000 civilians also died amid a surge in assassinations against government officials and religious leaders, the U.N. said. Afghan security forces faced severe morale and supply issues as they fought the emboldened Taliban, said Abdul Mateen Sulaimankhail, a brigade commander in eastern Logar province last year. “I had to lie to my soldiers, that we had air support and ammunition, to keep them fighting,” Sulaimankhail said. The continuing bloodshed has undermined public support in Afghanistan for the long-delayed peace talks between the Kabul government and the Taliban, the Freedom’s Sentinel report said.³⁴

In strategic assessment, the 2020 resurgence of the Taliban as *mujahidin* situates the US as strategic interlocutors between two irreconciled domestic authorities in Afghanistan both in treaties with the US. In cyber realist assessment, the narrative inconsistencies highlighted here could be ascertained with a basic Internet search.

Arriving at the conclusion that the publication is strategic as part of a military deception, as well as that of the political strategy behind the attacks – perpetuating the failure of a state and military intervention, – requires some prior knowledge beyond a basic Internet search. It is a conclusion reached through cyber realist theory which assumes near perfect governmental implementation and near perfect governmental access to information.

As recently as July 3, 2021, portions of a Taliban recruitment video from Afghanistan displayed in a DW News report clearly show a Taliban member wearing an Army regulation pixilated camouflage baseball cap with a GoArmy logo above the bill (the official US Army recruitment corporation). The news report is titled “Citizens rush to leave Afghanistan as Taliban retake territory” and details that the scores of people who have died on the day of US troop

³² <https://www.stripes.com/news/middle-east/eagle-down-examines-the-secretive-role-of-us-special-forces-in-afghanistan-1.659578>

³³ <https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/02.29.20-US-Afghanistan-Joint-Declaration.pdf>

³⁴ <https://www.stripes.com/news/middle-east/deal-meant-to-end-war-in-afghanistan-seen-to-embolden-taliban-1.663800>

withdrawal died by airstrikes and precisely how the Taliban has retaken Afghanistan.³⁵ Meanwhile 650 US Special Operations troops remain in the country.³⁶

As I discuss later on the lack of distinction between terrorism and cartel³⁷ violence, it should be noted that the withdrawal of 18,000 US contractors is also implicit in the US military exit from Afghanistan. Reports have framed this “loss” in the following words:

Afghan government forces could lose the single most important military advantage they have over the Taliban — air power — when private contractors and U.S. troops leave the country in coming weeks... Without the contractors' help, Afghan forces will no longer be able to keep dozens of fighter planes, cargo aircraft, U.S.-made helicopters and drones flying for more than a few more months, according to military experts and a recent Defense Department inspector general's report.³⁸

With this information and assessment, the undeniable presence of brand new paraphernalia of the major US Army contractor GoArmy in a high definition propaganda video for the Taliban recorded and displayed at the time of US troop and contractor withdrawal indicates further the strategic aim behind the terroristic airstrikes on the same day. The political strategy behind the attacks is to perpetuate the failure of a state and necessity of military intervention to stave off the anomic human rights abuses perpetrated by terrorists and cartels alike. Once again, the conclusion I reach is that the publications are strategic military deception on the part of US irregular troops and contractors. Interestingly in this instance we have the name and corporate logo of the Army propaganda and recruitment contractor (GoArmy). It is possible then that GoArmy is responsible for producing the aforementioned Taliban propaganda video. In the section The Capital of the Secret, I recount unusual practices I encountered earlier in research attempting to contact Army recruitment and GoArmy.

In the case of defected military units of irregular warfare practitioners, such as the Zeta Cartel and the paramilitary Wagner Group, the techniques are applied with anomic violence in order to delegitimize the state. It is possible to carry this out because at the bureaucratic level consensus on law and treaty have been strategically disregarded or corrupted. These operations work at two-tiers, for example, the passing of post-9/11 laws of constitutional abrogation along with the outrageous human rights abuses committed during the Iraq and Afghan Wars. The occurrence of both are considered worldwide as the beginning of the American decline. A nation appearing to have no control over violence in its territory is generally considered a failed state. This means that irregular warfare units of a state are intentionally used by governmental elements to bring about the failure of a state, permitting the rise of criminal networks and depriving non-members of access to government as monopoly holder on violence and infringements.

Air Force Major Zachary Martin writes in “The Hydra: the strategic paradox of human security in Mexico”:

³⁵ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o2Uba-210Qw> Citizens rush to leave Afghanistan as Taliban retake territory | DW News 3 July 2021

³⁶ <https://www.militarytimes.com/flashpoints/2021/03/25/special-operations-command-chief-afghans-need-us-troops-to-counter-taliban/> ; <https://apnews.com/article/afghanistan-us-troop-withdrawal-ac5f7fc24364ac46020cce8bee581815>

³⁷ (*cartel: a group of similar independent companies who join together to control prices and limit competition.*) <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/cartel>

³⁸ <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/national-security/without-u-s-contractors-afghan-military-will-lose-its-main-n1269686>

The high level of violence and the paramilitary capabilities of some cartels draw easy comparisons with modern irregular warfare. Some of the violence enacted by cartels displays a level of anomie that bears resemblance to terrorist tactics. Anomic violence relates to purposeless and gruesome acts of aggression in complete contravention of societal norms and values... The cartels create regional instability that foreign competitors can leverage to gain access to the Western hemisphere. The human security threat draws the attention of nearly every international and nongovernmental entity in the world... States cannot wage war, as traditionally conceived, against such a threat.³⁹

The role of US Joint Forces and US Intelligence in bringing about irregular warfare conditions domestically and abroad including through scenario-based media reports is the subject of the section Horseshoes and Hand Grenades.

Like the Arab Spring itself, ISIS has been, in the words of retired US Army officer Scott Bennet, “an operation being planned in the United States to break up Arab societies and governments to be ‘rearranged’ by the Western powers, NATO etc.”⁴⁰

Like the briefings planning the Arab Spring Bennett witnessed within the RAND Corporation which planned “flooding Arab social media with ‘democracy’ and ‘revolution’ tags”, promotion and recruitment for ISIS has been an operation highly centered on flooding and infiltrating Arab social media. The real-world manifestations of information operations are addressed and further theorized upon in the section Radio-logical Warfare.

Internet and US tanks have not been the only technical indicators of the Islamic State as an US operation. ISIS declared its caliphate live in Mosul one day in June of 2014 after the withdrawal of US regular troops.⁴¹ At the same time, the Obama Administration deployed a significant number of US Special Forces trained in irregular warfare to remain in Iraq.⁴²

On the origin of irregular warfare practice in Iraq, the US ISIL Finance Team reports:

ISIL’s origins stem from the leadership of Abu Musab Al-Zarqawi. Zarqawi created the insurgency, *Jama’at Tawhid wa al-Jihad*, predecessor to Al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) in 2004, and subsequently ISIL. Zarqawi believed in brutal, militant Islamic ideologies and possessed organizational, operational, and strategic skills. He successfully recruited former Baath party members from Saddam Hussein’s government who possessed intelligence and counterintelligence, networking tradecraft, smuggling expertise, battlefield skills, and access to weapons caches.⁴³

In contrast, early Iraq War open-sourced reports dispute the claim that insurgency and irregular warfare were orchestrated by the pre-2003 Iraqi government:

Early in the war in Iraq, it was a common theory amongst American commentators that Saddam Hussein had planned the insurgency before he was overthrown in April 2003. The signs of a pre-planned guerrilla war seemed to be everywhere with Iraqi militias attacking the

³⁹ Martin, Zachary. *The Hydra: the strategic paradox of human security in Mexico*. Wright Flyer Paper No. 78. Air University Press. 2020, p. 6; 33; 2.

⁴⁰ The a-Infos Radio Project. “US Army Whistleblower says Arab Spring was a RAND Corporation ‘Product’”. *State of the City Reports*. 21 April 2017.

⁴¹ *Once Upon a Time in Iraq*. 14 July 2020. <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/film/once-upon-a-time-in-iraq/>

⁴² <https://www.military.com/daily-news/2014/06/24/90-us-special-forces-troops-arrive-in-baghdad.html>

⁴³ Office of the Director of National Intelligence. “ISIL Finances: Future Scenarios”. The Office of the Director of National Intelligence. 27 September 2016, p. 3.

Coalition during the invasion, weapons stashes found all over the country, the U.S. proclaiming that the insurgency was made up of former soldiers and Baathists, etc. The Americans however, found hundreds of thousands of Iraqi documents, and captured and thoroughly interrogated Saddam before he was sentenced to death by an Iraqi court and executed, along with his top leadership. These findings were put together into the Iraqi Perspectives Project. It found that Saddam never planned to carry on an irregular war with the Americans after the invasion, because he never believed that Washington would overthrow him, even up to his last days in office. From 2003 to 2006 there was a lot of American reporting claiming that Saddam Hussein had planned to continue on the fight with the U.S. after he was deposed. An early example of this was a July 2003 article in *Newsweek* that claimed to have found an order from the Iraqi intelligence service, the Mukhabarat [Intelligence] to conduct looting after the invasion. It also instructed agents to attack power plants, assassinate clerics, and create general chaos. The magazine thought this was a proof that Saddam gave orders to create the insurgency, although it noted the document had not been verified. The magazine wrote another piece in October 2004 that quoted some analysts who believed that Saddam planned the insurgency before the invasion. That same month, the final findings of the Iraq Survey Group were released, which said that Saddam decided to continue the fight after his regime fell. It used as evidence the fact that the Iraqi army had dispersed weapons throughout the countryside from April 2002 to January 2003. Two months later, *U.S. News & World Report* claimed that U.S. intelligence reports pointed to the same thing. It cited a fall 2002 report by the Pentagon's Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force that said Saddam ordered 1,000-1,200 officers of the Mukhabarat, Directorate of Military Intelligence, and Directorate of General Security to go for irregular warfare training. On December 3, 2004, a Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) assessment said that Saddam planned to continue the fight after the invasion, and that was why former elements of the regime such as the Saddam Fedayeen, the Mukhabarat, the Special Security Organization, the Special Republican Guard, and former Baath Party members were responsible for the majority of attacks in the country. In February 2005, *Newsweek* ran another story on how Saddam hid millions of dollars and arms throughout the country to prepare for a guerrilla war. It claimed that on July 2002 Saddam issued a directive to his forces to drag America into irregular fighting. That was followed by a January 2003 order to sow chaos after the invasion by destroying infrastructure and looting government offices. In September 2005, there was a story in *Time* that claimed in April 2003 Saddam met with his Vice President Izzat Ibrahim al-Duri, Muhammad Yunis al-Ahmed, a senior member of the Military Bureau, and members of the Mukhabarat in Baghdad, and told them to organize their followers to resist the Americans. U.S. intelligence then hypothesized that Saddam, through his Military Bureau began organizing these cells to fund and supply insurgents. It was probably no coincidence that Duri and Ahmed became two competing leaders of the Baath Party in exile after the overthrow of Saddam, and led Iraqi militant groups from Syria.⁴⁴

As Kate Doyle, senior analyst at the National Security Archive writes on techniques learned in US training applied by Mexican cartels, known for their brutality and advanced

⁴⁴ Wing, Joel. "Did Saddam Plan The Insurgency In Iraq?" *Musings On Iraq*. 26 February 2011.

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electronic operations, “That US military training and intelligence techniques ended up in the wrong hands is far from unusual.”⁴⁵

Similarly, Greek Army veteran who trained with the US Marine Corps and Army Stavros Atlamazoglou has commented on the techniques of the equally brutal and electronic warfaring paramilitary unit Wagner which frequently coincides in battle zones with ISIS, saying,

Wagner personnel are operating in a way similar to US special-operations units, for which partnering with local forces and directing American firepower have become pretty standard around the world since the 2001 overthrow of the Taliban in Afghanistan.⁴⁶

The role of US Joint Forces⁴⁷ and US Intelligence in bringing about irregular warfare conditions under the auspices of ISIS is detailed in the following table of testimony of ISIS techniques, labelled on the right as the method of irregular warfare it represents.

Table of Irregular Warfare Techniques Employed by ISIS

Testimony & Reports	Irregular Warfare Tactic
[Interviewer] “Would ISIS have existed if America had stayed?” [Male interviewee 2] “I don’t think so, no. The Americans would have stopped that. The USA committed two major bad things in Iraq. First was invasion, and the second was withdrawing from Iraq.”	Military Deception Operation - withdrawal of regular forces from Iraq & increase in US Special Forces signaled shift to irregular warfare
“They understood how to attack us mentally before they attacked us with weapons. They made us fear them.”	Psychological Operation
“I remember at dawn, I heard the sound of megaphones. ‘We are the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant.’ [I said] ‘What Islamic State? What does this mean?’	Loudspeakers Used in Psychological Operation
“From day one, you would see in the street what they called the media outlet putting on the TV monitor ISIS videos, showing their propaganda... I saw, myself, children	Media Information Operation

⁴⁵ Ernst, Falko. “‘The training stays with you’: the elite Mexican soldiers recruited by cartels”. *The Guardian*. 10 February 2018.

⁴⁶ Atlamazoglou, Stavros. “How Putin's favorite mercenaries are using secretive operations to tip the balance in Africa”. *Business Insider*. 9 September 2020.

⁴⁷ “MILDEC [military deception] is a joint activity to which the Army, as the primary joint land component, contributes. Army forces do not unilaterally conduct MILDEC.” See: Army, Headquarters Department of the. *Army Support to Military Deception*. Department of the Army. 26 February 2019, p. 1-2.

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between twelve to fifteen years old joining ISIS just after watching a video.”	
ISIS trades sex slaves via the Internet	Cyber Operation and Psychological Operation
“With ISIS, rape is part of their propaganda campaign in their bid to wipe out the Yazidi.”	Psychological and Information Operation
“ISIS extremist burnt alive 19 Kurdish women for rejecting sex slavery. The victims, who had been taken by ISIS as sex slaves, were placed in iron cages in central Mosul and burned to death in front of hundreds of people.” ⁴⁸	Psychological Operation
“IS strategically used Twitter between April and June 2014 with the application ‘The Dawn of Glad Tidings,’ which enabled its users to receive up-to-date news about IS progress.”	Media Operation
“The application could also take control of a consenting user’s account to automatically send out tweets.”	Cyber Operation
“Prominent official IS members and supporters signed up for and formally endorsed the app as a trusted and official source of news.”	Information Propaganda Operation
“‘The Dawn of Glad Tidings’ automatically sent out links to official IS news releases and media, and hashtags that the ISIS social media team wanted to promote.”	Information Operation
“Although the application had been suspended by Twitter at the end of Summer 2014, the number of pro-IS accounts in 2014 and 2015 remained significant, further enriched by thousands of bots (i.e., computer software pieces that act like actual Twitter users) tweeting and retweeting specific contents.”	Information Operation
“Those bots were particularly active, for example, in retweeting IS official propaganda	Information and Psychological Operation

⁴⁸ AHT Staff. “Picture shows ISIS Yazidi sex slaves sold in horrifying auctions to Saudi Arabia”. *American Herald Tribune*. 25 September 2016.

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messages, such as the videos of beheadings and the video <i>Flames of War</i> released in September 2014 by Al-Hayat.”	
“IS... exploits different media platforms, audiovisual contents, and synergies among various media assets to enhance its messages. IS propaganda has been quite simply defined as ‘multidimensional’ or as a ‘mix of techniques at the crossroad between moviemaking and videogames’.”	Multidomain Information Operation
“the magazine <i>Dabiq</i> narratives, [and] IS propaganda as a comprehensive transmedia strategy centered on three key assets: synergistic storytelling, imaginary world-making, and semantic triggering.”	Information and Psychological Operation
“the Islamic State's 'official' news agency <i>Amaq</i> , shows [hostaged] British journalist John Cantlie discussing coalition airstrikes in Mosul.”	Media and Psychological Operation
“The Islamic State maintains its official Al Bayan radio station”	Electronic Information Operation
ISIS “publishes a heavy stream of short releases on an encrypted phone app called Telegram”	Cyber and Information Operation
ISIS has official Media Committee to control its media policy	Information Operation
“ISIS: they try to protect the identity and location of their leaders by minimizing Internet communications while they take advantage of social media for recruitment”	Military Deception and Media Information Operation
“They [ISIS] use a globally distributed network of volunteers who create content to fit the aesthetic of their particular region”	Media Information Operation and Culture Operation

#1-4 *Once Upon a Time in Iraq*. PBS. (July 14, 2020)

#5 *ISIS's Use of Sexual Violence in Iraq* by Ghandour, Christel (2019)

#6 “Women who are captured by Isis and kept as slaves endure more than just sexual violence” *The Independent* (Nov. 29, 2016)

#7 “Picture shows ISIS Yazidi sex slaves sold in horrifying auctions to Saudi Arabia”. *American Herald Tribune*. (September 25, 2016)

#8-16 “Explaining the Islamic State’s Online Media Strategy: A Transmedia Approach” by Sara Monaci (2017)

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#17 “Gaunt, pale but still alive: British hostage John Cantlie looks shockingly thin in chilling new ISIS propaganda video in which he 'attacks' the US for bombing Mosul's 'finest university’” *The Daily Mail* (July 13, 2016)

#18-20 “A News Agency With Scoops Directly From ISIS, and a Veneer of Objectivity” *The New York Times* (January 14, 2016)

#21 Farwell in “Measuring the Impact of ISIS Social Media Strategy” (2018)

#22 Gates and Potter in “Measuring the Impact of ISIS Social Media Strategy” (2018)

Hackers' Wars is a draft of a working paper arguing that the Arab Spring and its resulting coups and wars across the Middle East were orchestrated by US law enforcement, intelligence, and the military establishment with the willing and knowing cooperation of hacker groups like Anonymous, big technology companies, major media outlets and major policy institutions.

Hackers' wars are irregular warfare information operations⁴⁹ incorporating electronic warfare operations⁵⁰ conducted by a state which deliberately involve populations to effect war, coup, or other conditions of life calculated to bring about physical destruction. These operations are typically carried out as wargames before or simultaneously with the execution of the real-world operation. The most salient features of hackers' wars are propaganda efforts, surveillance, cyberespionage and hacking, electronic weaponry deployment, and, importantly, the misattribution of these cyber coercion and deterrence techniques. The role of cyberweaponry is most saliently concealed in hackers' wars because information operations, as "U.S. policy suggests[,] these types of operations fall below the threshold of armed conflict," and are therefore not "considered an armed attack under international law" or "an act of war". As professor of strategy Sean McFate has put it, "irregular warfare manufactures the fog of war" present in wars of armed conflict; conversely, DARPA's Information Processing Techniques Office repeated adage maintains "Information lifts the fog of war". In short, hackers' wars are the wars brought about by hackers. The Arab Spring is addressed as hackers' wars in this present study.

This study looks at current events, social media, scholarly publications, cyber technology, and media trends, adapting an approach of cyber realism to the Arab Spring conversation. Applying Max Weber's political theory of monopolies on violence and legitimate infringements to cyber politics, this approach emphasizes technical aspects and current events as products of the US wargame and intelligence industries. Clausewitz's social structure of war triad is applied to the cyber domain, identifying those with end-to-end control of the popular passions, operational instruments, and policy decisions of war. All of these aspects are considered in order to give a timely answer to the current international security crises of media revolutions and cyberterrorism.

⁴⁹ From Congressional Research Service *Defense Primer: Information Operations*: While there is currently no official U.S. government (USG) definition of information warfare (IW), practitioners typically conceptualize it as a strategy for the use and management of information to pursue a competitive advantage, including both offensive and defensive operations... which include computer network attack, computer network defense, and computer network exploitation; psychological operations (PSYOP); electronic warfare (EW); operations security (OPSEC); and military deception (MILDEC).

⁵⁰ From Congressional Research Service *Defense Primer: Electronic Warfare*: Electronic warfare (EW), as defined by the Department of Defense (DOD), are military activities that use electromagnetic energy to control the electromagnetic spectrum ("the spectrum") and attack an enemy... Applications include radio frequencies to communicate with friendly forces; microwaves for tactical data-links, radars, and satellite communications; infrared for intelligence and to target enemies; and lasers across the entire spectrum to communicate, transmit data, and potentially destroy a target.